Reviewer’s report

Title: Peer-based behavioral health program for drug users in China: A pilot study

Version: 5 Date: 29 June 2011

Reviewer: Patrizia Carrieri

Reviewer’s report:

The authors addressed most of the questions in a very detailed way and the design is much clearer now.

There are still few points that need clarification.

1) Informed consent: according to the declaration of Helsinki, verbal informed consent is admitted only if there are third person present confirming that the intervention was not compulsory.

2) The table reported the results of the mixed model is not clear enough and need to be either simplified or removed. The number of people and repeated measures included is not indicated in the table. Unluckily I realize only now that the mixed model which is in general the adequate method for analyzing these designs, will not be very performant due to clustered missing data. This was unclear to me as I thought that the additional sample had an evaluation at each time point.

I hope the author kept the additional sample out of the analysis. The label should better correspond to the variable: e.g. they use treat for the intervention group. The table seems as they just copied and pasted from the output. As they do not comment the results in the discussion I maybe prefer they remove this table.

3) There are too many tables. Table 5 can be removed and summarised in the text. Table 6 can be removed and summarized in a sentence if it is worth doing it... maybe not.

4) What is interesting in this paper (and that was of course difficult) is that the researchers measured attitudes and behaviors after release in the community and of course this was possible for a limited number of inmates. The label of first follow-up and second follow-up should be “in rehabilitation centers” “in the community after release”, respectively.

4) There are a lot of results and the discussion is a bit limited with respect to the critical mass of the results.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests